# Challenges and prospects of the Indonesian pro-East Timor movement

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BASICALLY, the Indonesian government's justification to maintain its control over East Timor rests on two interlocking lies. The first lie is that the majority of the East Timorese people have asked to join Indonesia, which until now has never been proven through a UN- supervised referendum.

The second lie, however, is more subtle and implicit, namely that all the Indonesian people have accepted East Timor's annexation, since it has been ratified into law by the Indonesian parliament on July 17, 1976. What the Indonesian government has never admitted to the outside world is that there is a rapidly growing number of young and elderly Indonesians, who have began to support the East Timor struggle.

In 1991, after the Dili massacre, one could still count the number of Indonesian supporters with the fingers on two hands and two feet. But at the time of writing this book, all the twenty fingers on my hands and feet are not enough to count all the groups and individuals involved in the Indonesian pro-East Timor movement.

First of all, allow me to introduce the organisations who pioneered this movement at the end of 1991, namely Infight (Indonesian Front for the Defense of Human Rights), LPHAM (Lembaga Penegakan Hak-hak Asasi Manusia = Institute to Uphold Universal Human Rights) and Yayasan Hidup Baru (= New Life Foundation) in Jakarta, twelve student councils which congregated at the campus of the Parahyangan Catholic University in Bandung, and a student organisation in Yogyakarta.

Dozens of members of Infight, LPHAM, and Hidup Baru took part in the demonstration of 70 East Timorese youth in front of the UN Rep. Office in Jakarta on Nov. 19, 1991. After the demonstrations, some of them were interrogated by the Indonesian military and police, and had to return for more interrogations during the consequent weeks. One of Infight's founders is an East Timorese, Jose Amorim Dias, a former theology student who currently resides in the Netherlands in his capacity as a CNRM representative. Meanwhile, the leader of LPHAM, H.J.C. Princen, a Dutch-born human rights activists who has repeatedly negotiated with the Indonesian authorities during various attempts of young East Timorese to obtain asylum overseas. He has met the former Portuguese President, Mario Soares, several years ago, on behalf of the asylum seekers in the Finnish and Swedish embassies.

One the same day of the demonstration in Jakarta, the Yogyakarta Students Association (Ikatan Mahasiswa Yogyakarta) circulated by fax their petition about the Dili massacre, stating among others that: "For the sake of humanity and our common well-being we ask the government to reconsider the fake process of integration in East Timor, which seems to claim more and more lives out of any proportion to the level of support for integration among the East Timorese people. We suggest that a referendum supervised by the UN should be immediately held in order to establish the real wishes of the population of East Timor."

Four days after the Jakarta demonstration, twelve student councils who congregated at the campus of the Parahyangan Catholic University in Bandung, also faxed out to the world their petition about the Dili massacre, and held a protest rally on the campus. This event was only timidly covered by the now banned weekly Tempo (Nov. 30, 1991: 22- 23), showing the students' banner on a two-pages photograph, without any reference to Dili or East Timor in its caption. The students' petition stated, a.o., that: "We demand that the government of the Republic of Indonesia withdraws all its armed forces as quickly as possible from East Timor, and grants a full and free right of self-determination to the people of East Timor, to minimalise further loss of life."

The twelve student councils who signed the Nov. 23, 1991 petition in Bandung came from Parahyangan University (Bandung), Padjadjaran University (Bandung), the Bandung Institute of Technology, Ibnu Khaldun University (Bogor), the University of Indonesia (Jakarta), Pancasila University (Jakarta), the Indonesia Technology Institute (Jakarta), the Jakarta Teachers College, Gadjah Mada University (Yogyakarta), Diponegoro University (Semarang), 11 March University (Solo), and the 10 November Technology Institute (Surabaya). Nine student activists, among others, the main initiator, Pius Lustrilanang, were arrested but released within several days by the security apparatus in Bandung.

Prior to these public protests, an underground organization had already published pro-East Timor pamphlets, translated from the original English edition into Indonesian. In its Indonesian edition of the London-based bulletin, Tapol , the publisher used the name "Front Islam untuk Demokrasi dan Hak-hak Azasi Manusia di Indonesia" [Islamic Front for Democracy and Human Rights in Indonesia]. In its Nov. 1991 edition it published Robert Domm's interview with Xanana Gusmao in the mountains of East Timor. The same group has also translated Professor Antonio Barbedo de Magalhaes's 1992 book, East Timor, Indonesian occupation and genocide, into Indonesian.

Now, six years later, the number of above- and underground pro-East Timor publications and organisations have multiplied rapidly. In Jakarta, Infight, LPHAM, and Hidup Baru have been

joined by Pijar, Yapipham, Institut Sosial Jakarta, and the Joint Committee for the Defense of the East Timorese (JCDET).

In 1995, Pijar published an Indonesian translation of the report by UN Special Rapporteur, Bacre Waly Ndiaye, of his visit to East Timor on July 3-13, 1994. It has also published the May 11, 1992 defence plea of Fernando de Araujo, leader of the underground East Timorese student organisation, Renetil, titled Anak muda Timor Timur melihat persoalan bangsanya [Young East Timorese Look at Their People's Problems]. The former chairperson of Pijar, Rachland Nashidik, and the editor of the organisation's bulletin, Kabar dari Pijar [ = News from Pijar], Tri Agus Susanto Siswowiharjo (TASS), were the only Indonesians who managed to attend the Manila APCET in May 1994. Pijar has also become a member of the Asia-Pacific Coalition on East Timor.

In his own defence plea before the Central Jakarta court on July 17, 1995 [ironically, the date of East Timor's official incorporation into Indonesia], Tri Agus, who was tried for publishing an insulting statement to Suharto in his bulletin, publicly rejected the regime's occupation of East Timor. He is still serving his sentence in a jail in Cirebon, West Java, after being removed from the Cipinang jail in Jakarta, where he developed a strong friendship with the jailed East Timor leader, Xanana Gusmao, and a leader of the clandestine East Timorese student movement in Java and Bali, Fernando de Araujo. Tri Agus' interviews and human interest stories about the East Timorese political prisoners often appeared on Pijar's email network, smuggling out of the prison by fellow Pijar activists.

While all the previously emerging organisations had a secular character, Yapipham and Institut Sosial Jakarta are both more religiously inspired. Yapipham, an inter-religious organization, was initiated by Agus Edi Santosa, a former leader of the Islamic student association, Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI), who previously worked clandestinely to educate his fellow Muslim student activists about the Timor issue. Last year, Yapipham published a manual for the training of human rights and pro-democracy activists.

Institut Sosial Jakarta (ISJ), began as a community organizing training institute for Jesuit novices, but later began to involve lay activists in defending the rights of the poor in Jakarta and the surrounding industrial zones. In that capacity they became involved in assisting the East Timorese workers, who had been recruited by President Suharto's eldest daughter, to work in the factories owned by the Suharto oligarchy. At the time of writing this book, the institute's director, Fr.

Ignatius Sandyawan, is waiting to be taken to court for providing sanctuary for the leaders of the currently outlawed People's Democratic Party (PRD).

Next comes the Joint Committee for the Defense of the East Timorese (JCDET), an alliance of the well-known Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI), Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat (Elsam), a new human rights organisation which specializes in publishing popular literature about the United Nations human rights instruments while documenting the violations of those legal tools in Indonesia and East Timor, and the social justice departments of the Protestant council of churches (PGI) and the Catholic conference of bishops (KWI). This coalition provides legal aid and pastoral care to East Timorese political prisoners in East Timor and Indonesia.

In West Java, the Bandung student activists who organized the 1991 student protest have now been joined by several smaller legal aid organisations in Bogor (LBH Ampera) and Bandung (LBH Nusantara). While in Yogyakarta, the role of the 1991 Yogyakarta student association has been replaced by Lekhat (Lembaga Kajian Hak-hak Masyarakat ), a new human rights organisation. This organisation was founded by law graduates from the Islamic Indonesian University (UII). It has published four editions of Suara Rakyat Maubere , containing Xanana Gusmao's letter from the Cipinang prison to the Indonesian solidarity groups, the defence plea of Aleixio da Silva (Cobra) in Dili, the defence plea of Juvencio de J. Martins in Jakarta, and an edited form of Xanana Gusmao's defence plea.

In Salatiga, Central Java, an ad hoc coalition of students and lecturers of the Satya Wacana Christian University launched a strong protest against the "Liquica incident" in early 1995. The core of this group, the Gemi Nastiti (Geni) Foundation, has published their views on East Timor even further in their bulletin, Asap . In its Dec. 1995 edition, during the height of the anti-Belo demonstrations in Java, Asap published an interview with the author criticizing those demonstrations, together with other articles commemorating the Nov. 12, 1991 tragedy.

Prior to that, some Geni members had published critical articles on "development" in East Timor, including the coffee monopoly, in Dian Ekonomi , a bulletin of Satya Wacana's Economy students. Another member of Geni has obtained first-hand experience of life as a journalist in East Timor. He worked for a short period with Suara Timor Timur (STT ), the only daily in East Timor, and observed how even Indonesian journalists were harassed constantly by the military and their civilian thugs.(1)

In the years following the Dili massacre and the capture of Xanana, the progressive student press in Java began to follow those events and report them, much more widely and critically than the government- controlled mainstream media. In 1994, for instance, an Indonesian translation of Xanana Gusmao's defence plea was published in Hayam Wuruk, a Diponegoro University student bulletin in Semarang, Central Java. A year before, this literature students bulletin was the first Indonesian-based publication to publish the author's first public criticism of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor in the Indonesian language.(2)

Another student bulletin which has persistently raised public awareness about the damaging impact of the occupation is Pijar , published by the philosophy students at the Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta. In 1993, Pijar published an article by a young Gajah Mada anthropologist, Aris Arief Mundayat, comparing the capture of Diponegoro during the Dutch colonial period with the capture and of Xanana Gusmao by the Indonesian occupation troops, to illustrate the phenomenon of Indonesian militarism.(3) The editors and contributors of these two progressive student bulletins - Pijar and Hayam Wuruk - have now become some of the major promoters of SMID and its political party, PRD, which we will discuss later.

Being located farther away from Jakarta and Yogyakarta, East Java's student and human rights activists joined the Indonesian East Timor solidarity movement at a later stage. One of the major catalysts was the trial of Jose Antonio Neves, which began in mid 1994 until early 1995. To prepare their defense of the former theology student, the Surabaya Legal Aid Institute (LBH Surabaya) began to communicate more closely with the East Timorese student activists in East Java, who provided them with literature on this issue. Through the Joint Committee (JCDET), the author was also involved as an expert witness. Eventually, the East Javanese lawyers provided a very strong defense plea, arguing for the East Timorese right to self-determination and hence, the illegal nature of the trial. And, since LBH Surabaya was also closely associated with the student and human rights activists, more and more Indonesian activists in East Java began to understand the issue better.

Another major catalyst for those activists to join the East Timor solidarity movement was the fact that the majority of the East Timorese students who tried to occupy the US Embassy during the APEC came from East Java. The stories of these students who were arrested by the East Java police and military helped to socialize their plight among their Indonesian colleagues. Interestingly enough, the majority of Indonesian students who were arrested, tried, and jailed for insulting the President in front of the parliament building in Dec. 1993, also came from East Java. This also solidified the opposition movement in East Java.

Following the steps of their predecessors, several `underground' pro-East Timor media have also emerged during the last six years. A group which called itself `Gerakan Anti Pembodohan' ("Movement Against Ignorance"] has published a brochure, Timor Timur: sekarang waktunya untuk bicara [East Timor, now is the time to speak], which outlined the history of the East Timor issue, Xanana Gusmao's defence plea, and his well-known peace plan. Another group which simply called itself `The East Solidarity,' has published a bilingual (Indonesian and English) edition of Xanana's auto-biography in early 1996, in which I was asked to write a Foreword. Apart from those booklets, various underground pro-East Timorese bulletins in the Indonesian language have appeared, such as Funu and Kay Rala Lian, which have involved more young East Timorese rather than Indonesian students.

Speaking about publications, the role of alternative publishers also need to be mentioned. Yayasan Bentang Budaya in Yogyakarta, has published in 1994 an anthology of thirteen short stories, titled Saksi Mata [Eyewitness], written by a well-known journalist and short story writer, Seno Gumira Ajidarma. This young man was temporarily suspended from the weekly magazine, Jakarta-Jakarta , when he published a critical report of the Dili massacre in its January 4-10, 1992 edition.

During his suspension he turned his journalistic field notes into thirteen short stories, which do not mention East Timor by name, hence it could be published in the art and literature week-end sections of various major newspapers in Jakarta. This anthology, has also been translated into English with an extended introduction by the author. Seno himself was, unfortunately, prohibited from attending the launching of the English edition of his book, Eyewitness, which was first published by ITT Imprint in Sydney in 1995.

All those pioneering steps of young Indonesian democrats have now been joined by a mass organisation of students, workers, peasants, and artists, which have congregated around a new political party, PRD (Partai Rakyat Demokratik , or People's Democratic Party). PRD's organ which deals specifically with East Timor is SPRIM (Solidaritas Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia untuk Rakyat Maubere ), or the Indonesian People's Struggle for Solidarity with the Maubere People. The core of SPRIM, which was established in March 1995, is SMID (Solidaritas Mahasiswa Indonesia untuk Demokrasi = Student Solidarity for Indonesian Democracy).

Established in 1991 by student activists in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Semarang, Solo and Bandung, SMID initially operated semi-legally for four years before changing itself into an open mass organisation. On June 9, 1995, SPRIM and SMID launched their first pro-East Timor mass action.

They organized a public rally at the office of the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM), to protest the arrest of thirty East Timorese youth by the Central Jakarta police. These arrests were presumably a preventive action taken by the Indonesian security apparatus to avoid any embarrassments for the Indonesian government, in the wake of the upcoming All Inclusive East Timorese Dialogue (AETD).

Next, fifty SPRIM members joined an equal number of East Timorese workers and students who occupied the Dutch and Russian embassies in Jakarta during the Nov. 12 commemoration in 1995. And on June 10, 1996, a delegation of 75 East Timorese youth and SPRIM members went to the parliament to protest against the murder of Manuel Soares by a Central Jakarta police officer.(4)

In last year's anti-military demonstrations in the major university towns in Java, two members of the East Timor solidarity movement - SMID and Pijar - are at the forefront. The latter one has transformed itself into a cadre organisation with branches in several cities. They have led hundreds of students and other young Indonesians in public rallies, protesting against the repression by the military, and in support of Megawati, the elected leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), who was overthrown in mid 1996 in an illegal congress, supported by the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI).

In all those pro-Megawati and anti-ABRI demonstrations, PRD member organisations have always included the party's demand for a referendum in East Timor, in addition to a Rp 7000 minimum wage for workers, a clean election, a new party, and a new president.

All these activities of courageous young Indonesian and East Timorese activists have had an impact on the older pro-democracy activists, who had not dare to oppose the government's view on East Timor before. The first senior pro-democracy activist who has now come up more forcefully about East Timor is Gunawan Mohammad, former editor of one of the magazines banned in June 1994. Together with other journalists from the banned media, he has founded an alternative journalist association, AJI (Aliansi Jurnalis Independen ), which published an oppositional bulletin, Independen , which was later renamed, Suara Independen (Independent Voice). This bulletin has attacked the pro-integration East Timor diplomacy of the President's daughter, Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, as well as the exploitation of East Timorese female workers in a large integrated textile factory in Central Java, PT Sritex.

The next senior pro-democracy activist to join the pro-East Timor movement was Mochtar Pakpahan, leader of an independent trade union, SBSI (Serikat Buruh Setiakawan Indonesia =

Indonesian Solidarity Trade Union). He has come out in support of a UN-supervised referendum in East Timor. The labour and constitutional lawyer, who had been previously jailed for his trade union activities has stated his viewpoint on East Timor in a new book, Potret negara Indonesia [Portrait of the Indonesian state], published by his legal aid group, Yayasan Forum Adil Sejahtera. In a trip to Canada, early last year, Pakpahan reiterated his support for a referendum in East Timor (Catholic New Times, Toronto, June 9, 1996)

Finally, the jewel on the crown for the East Timorese struggle is a leading Islamic dissident, Sri Bintang Pamungkas, who has also become a supporter of the East Timorese people's right to self-determination. This leader of another `illegal' new political party, PUDI (Partai Uni Demokrasi Indonesia), does not seem to be intimidated by the 34 months prison sentence he has received in May 1996, for participating in anti-Suharto activities in Germany, earlier that year. At the time of writing this paper, he was still appealing to the Supreme Court.

This new development was not so surprising, after all what the former parliamentarian has undergone since he was wrongly accused of instigating the anti-Suharto demonstrations in Dresden, Germany. It was also not surprising, considering that two veterans of the earliest anti-Dili massacre demonstration in Jakarta, Jopie Lasut from Yayasan Hidup Baru and Saleh Abdullah from Infight, also sit on the board of PUDI.

It is partly because of their support for East Timor that the Indonesian authorities have taken Mochtar Pakpahan, Budiman Sujatmiko, PRD's chairperson, Petrus Heryanto, PRD's secretary general, Dita Sari, the head of PRD's trade union, Coen Husein Pontoh, the head of PRD's peasant union, and sixteen other PRD leaders to court at the end of last year. These political trials are taking place in full speed, since it seemed that the regime wanted to put all these bright Indonesian intellectuals behind bars, before the May 1997 general elections. They were accused of subversion, which under the draconian law which the Indonesian state inherited from its colonial masters, carries the death penalty as its maximum sentence.

**Pebbles in the activists' shoes**

The road ahead is certainly not easy for this emerging Indonesian pro-East Timor movement. They are also suffering from the pebbles in their shoes, to borrow Ali Alatas' famous description about the impact of East Timorese resistance to Indonesian annexation. In fact, this young social movement in Indonesia, still has to face strong opposition from three politically very influential social groups.

The first group is obviously the Indonesian military, who have quite much to lose from pulling out from East Timor in terms of prestige, in terms of revenging fallen friends, in terms of financial rewards, and in terms of having an excellent training ground and important source for promotion. For instance, the 22 members of the Army elite corps, Kopassus , who were involved in the capture of Xanana Gusmao instantly received a one step promotion from the then Army's chief of staff, General Edi Sudrajat (Kompas, Dec. 13, 1992).

Likewise, 22 members of the Udayana division, who were involved in capturing Xanana's successor, Mau'hunu, also received an unusual instant promotion from the then Udayana division commander, Brig. Gen. Theo Syafei (Kompas, April 16, 1993).

In fact, East Timor has "produced" most of the generals who have served in the Indonesian armed forces during the last decade, from Benny Murdani to Prabowo Subianto, President Suharto's son-in-law. The former Air Force commander, Rilo Pambudi, was also a veteran of the Timor war, having obtained thousands of flying hours in Timor as the commander of and pilot in the notorious OV-10F squadron (Angkasa, Dec. 1993: 30).

In a more general sense, the 22-years long Timor war enabled the Indonesian military to refine their counter-insurgency as well as propaganda techniques, to apply "back home" in Indonesia to all sorts of "deviants," ranging from peasants, workers, students, tribal minorities, Vietnamese refugees trying to land in the Riau islands, using arms and other equipment purchased from "friendly" suppliers in the West and Japan with the rationale that these equipment were only used to quell "internal disturbances."

Next, the second group which have openly or tacitly opposed the Indonesian pro-East Timor movement are religious leaders, who did not want to lose East Timor for a variety of reasons. Prior to the invasion, both Muslim as well as Christian leaders sincerely believed in the government propaganda about the "Communist threat," embodied in Fretilin, which may turn East Timor into "a Southeast Asian Cuba." After the East Timorese Catholic church under the leadership of 1996 Nobel laureate Dom Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo became a major bastion of opposition, the reluctance of Indonesia's religious leaders to lose East Timor experienced a drastic metamorphosis.

Indonesian Christian leaders have a vested interest in clinging on East Timor, to enhance their bargaining power as a minority in Indonesia. In no other "Indonesian province" can Christians, especially Catholics, dominate the upper echelon of the provincial government, as in East Timor.

This should not be seen as an indicator of tolerance to East Timor's culture, since Catholic icons, practices and beliefs have been constantly harassed by Indonesian civilians and military personnel since the 1975 invasion, as we have discussed in previous chapters, but more to serve Indonesia's own (internal) political needs. It should be seen as a "safety valve," a "balancing mechanism," or simply a compensation for the dominant role which the Islamic scholars association, ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia), has came to play during Suharto's latest presidential term, after purging the bureaucracy and the armed forces from those who were seen to be unsympathetic towards "organized Islam."

Meanwhile, there has existed a feeling among some Muslim leaders that the Islamisation of the East Timorese people can reduce their anti-Indonesian feelings. This was expressed during the aftermath of the 1991 Dili massacre, when a major Islamic organisation criticized the government for prohibiting it from carrying out its missionary work in East Timor. Another organisation welcomed the capture of Xanana Gusmao, since it might open the doors more widely for their da'i , or Muslim missionaries (Sahid, Jan. 1993).

The official opening of East Timor in early 1989 had also been welcomed by another Islamic organisation as a chance to send more da'i into the territory. By that time, there were already two locally-based organisations which were already carrying out education, social welfare, and missionary activities in the region, supported by a large organisation in Jakarta.

The Indonesian government was also involved in promoting Islam in the region, in various ways. One of them is by sponsoring the construction of a large mosque in Dili, and appointing some da'i as civil servants. Then Indonesian military and para-military personnel were also involved in spreading Islam in the region. Muslim soldiers have taken Timorese orphans back to Indonesia to educate and Islamicize at Islamic boarding schools (pesantren ). Others, especially from the Siliwangi and Brawijaya divisions, had sponsored some Islamicization work, while fighting against the East Timorese guerilla movement (Merdeka, Nov. 25, 1988, cited in Hidup, Dec. 11, 1988: 25;Serial Media Dakwah, Jan. 1990: 54).

Finally, some members of Indonesian student regiments, who served under local military commanders, have allegedly tried to Islamicize East Timorese villagers in Los Palos. This may have caused the death of Joko Witoyo, one of the student regiment members, together with two professional military near Los Palos on March 17, 1993, in the hands of unidentified snipers.

Many Islamic leaders have become even more stronger supporters of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor, after Dom Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo sent a letter to the UN Secretary General demanding a referendum to be held in East Timor (Panji Masyarakat, June 1-10, 1989: 16, Sept. 11-20, 1989: 19).

In light of the fact that Islam has also become a motivating power in liberation movements in Palestine, Bosnia, and Chechnya, it is amazing to observe how these opportunistic Islamic leaders have blinded themselves from the fact that Catholicism have played a similar role in other independence movements. Not only in East Timor, but also in Northern Ireland, in Poland, and in the Baltic republics.

This ignorance about the revolutionary role of other religions is reflected in the way how these religious leaders have attempted to derogate the global human rights movement as an "international Christian-Western-Zionist conspiracy" against the so-called pro- Muslim Indonesian state. Within this frame of thinking, Portugal's role in defending the self-determination right of the East Timorese has been portrayed as a neo-colonial, or neo-imperialist plot. Also, within this frame of mind, the religiosity of Indonesians involved in the global human rights movement has been seriously questioned, especially if they were Muslims.(5)

Ironically, despite their declared pro-Palestinian attitude, these religious leaders have forgotten - or were not aware - that the commander of Indonesia's invasion of East Timor, General Benny Murdani, who later became the commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces, was a great admirer of the Israeli elite force, Mossad, and had built close links with the Israeli armed forces. Murdani had even equipped Indonesia's elite force, the Red Berets, with Israeli-made Uzi submachine guns. He had bought 32 used Skyhawk bomber planes from Israel for the Indonesian air force. All these arms deals were made, despite the absence of diplomatic ties with Israel, and despite the strong possibility that those planes had been used in Israel's numerous air raids against Palestinians refugees and the neighbouring Arab countries.(6)

It has been reported in the New York Times that the Indonesian troops who were involved in the massacre of Muslim protestors on Sept. 12, 1984, in Tanjung Priok, Jakarta, were armed with Uzi guns. So was the police guard of the best Irianese artists, Arnold Ap, before Ap was killed by Red Berets on a beach nearby Jayapura on April 26, 1984.(7)

In other words, the same institution which has cracked down on Indonesian Muslims in Tanjung Priok and other places, has also cracked down even harder on the East Timorese people, armed

with the very same weapons which have been used to oppress the Palestinians, who have also been displaced from their land, 27 years before the East Timorese.

Then, the third group of Indonesian who dislike the emerging pro- East Timor movement are pragmatic academics who prefer to improve the current situation in East Timor, under Indonesian rule, to create a convenient academic niche for themselves. They have refused to support the East Timorese people's independence aspirations which they believe, will trigger more repression from the Indonesian military. They even refuse to support a call for a referendum in East Timor, since they strongly believe that independence may trigger a civil war between pro- and counter-independence factions, which may repeat the blood baths of 1975.

This standpoint completely ignores the decisive role of the Indonesian military and its propaganda machinery in instigating the two-months armed conflict between UDT and Fretilin (August-Sept 1975). This domestic "civil war" pales in comparison to the international war which has raged in East Timor since the landing of the Indonesian troops on December 7, 1975.

They did not know, or pretended not to know, that the 1975 armed conflict between UDT and Fretilin has become an anachronism since the two parties formed their common platform in the late 1980s, and in are united in the territory under the umbrella of CNRM.

The myopic view of these pragmatic Indonesian academics also ignores the continuous role of the Indonesian military in maintaining the climate of terror in East Timor, where people were spying on each other and where a rift between East Timorese Catholics against Indonesian Muslims has systematically been nurtured for more than a decade.(8)

To justify their position, these pragmatic Indonesian academics have resorted to a myth, that the entire island of Timor was once united by the Belu kingdom with its capital in Waihale, near Atambua in West Timor. Another myth that they have resorted to is that the East Timorese people themselves demanded to join Indonesia through the so-called "Balibo declaration" on Nov. 30, 1975, which was actually a scheme of the late General Ali Murtopo's Special Operation (Opsus) unit.(9)

**Every cloud has a silver lining.**

Academics and non-academics alike, many Indonesians suffer from an ultra-nationalistic disease, feeling that they have to defend their country from every outsider's critique at all costs. This "right

or wrong my country" attitude was also shown in the popular support which President Suharto received, including from prominent academics and religious leaders, when he severed all Dutch development assistance to Indonesia in 1992.

However, the most common feeling which seems to unite the military, the opportunistic religious leaders and academics, as far as East Timor is concerned, is the irrational fear, that "if East Timor goes, than the entire Republic of Indonesia will disintegrate, like Yugoslavia and the USSR." This fear is irrational, for the following reasons.

The world is not only a showcase of disintegrating nations, but also of expanding nations. The USA, for instance, is much larger than the original thirteen colonies which founded the federation 200 years ago. However, apart from Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and probably Alaska, which have resisted to be assimilated by the dominant WASP (white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant) culture of mainland USA, there does not seem to be a danger of disintegration of the USA, even if Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Alaska might one day obtain their independence.

What about India, a non-Western country which is actually also an agglomeration of many nations and ethno-linguistic groups? And what about China, which has not followed the disintegrative scenario of the former USSR and Yugoslavia, and has even added territory by annexing Tibet, and will in the coming years gain complete control over Hong Kong and Macao?

The last 22 years since the annexation of East Timor has also seen the opposite trend of the disintegration fear of my fellow compatriots: we have seen the unification of Vietnam. In fact, the annexation of East Timor was partly triggered by the unification of Vietnam. With the end of the Cold War, we have also seen the unification of Germany. In fact, the collapse of the Berlin wall was one factor that ended the Cold War, apart from Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost .

In our part of the world we have also seen how the young people in Korea are dreaming of the unification of their peninsula. Likewise, Irish people all over the world dream of the unification of Ireland.

So, if the premise that "if East Timor goes, the entire republic will disintegrate" is true, than there must be something fundamentally wrong with the Indonesian republic. Not with the East Timorese people, who were only forced to join this republic, thirty years after Indonesia's declaration of independence. And, if it is really true that Indonesia's unity is very shaky, is it fair that East Timor should be blamed and punished, by having to lose one third of its people?

Thirdly, if it is true that East Timor is the most important link of the Indonesian chain, are we not violating Indonesia's own 1945 Constitution, which obliges all Indonesians to defend the right of every people to independence and also obliges all Indonesian citizens to fight colonialism wherever in the world?

Likewise, does forcing East Timor to stay within the Indonesian republic, at all costs, not violate the Pancasila state philosophy, which stresses the importance of five principles - belief in God, humanism, nationalism, democracy, and social justice - on equal standing?

Hence, how can a former guerilla army defend its position as an occupying force in East Timor, and at the same time claims that it is defending the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila? How can an army which very presence and acts in East Timor violate the mandate of the 1945 Constitution and the Pancasila principles, which it has to defend as stipulated in the army's doctrine, Sapta Marga ?

I do believe, however, that every cloud has a silver lining. Based on the examples of the young activists, spearheaded by the PRD and Pijar activists, as well as the older Indonesian intellectuals, such as Goenawan Mohammad, Mochtar Pakpahan, and Sri Bintang Pamungkas, I do believe that many more Indonesia intellectuals will come to grip with the reality, and eventually support the aspirations of the Maubere people.

In fact, in late November, last year, Professor Muladi, rector of the Diponegoro University in Semarang, Central Java, stated that "Indonesia should accelerate its efforts to find a solution to the problem of East Timor, which had left the nation vulnerable to criticism in international forums." He also conceded that Indonesia's image had been harmed by the Nobel Peace Prize to the Catholic bishop of East Timor. Interestingly, this statement by Muladi, a prominent lawyer and member of the National Human Rights Commission (Komnasham), who is a staunch supporter of the New Order regime which he had helped to set up as a student activist in 1966, was carried by Indonesia's state news agency, Antara. Hence it was instantly disseminated internationally by the foreign correspondents and international news agencies in Jakarta.

According to Muladi, Indonesia had become vulnerable to criticism because of a "collective mistake hard to correct by any means, as long as we have not resolved the East Timor issue." Without pointing his fingers at any one or any institution, he warned that "if these weaknesses are not overcome we will continue to be the target of attacks by irresponsible parties abroad." (10)

Based on reading various interviews with Abdurrachman Wahid, I do believe that more and more Indonesian religious leaders are going to support the East Timor cause. During the height of Indonesian Muslims' backlash against the ethnic riots in East Timor in September 1995, Abdurrachman Wahid - then speaking as leader of the Democracy Forum (Fordem) - , stated that the East Timor problem should be resolved by closing the gap between the Indonesian government and international public opinion. Also speaking as the leader of Indonesia's largest Islamic organisation, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), he said that NU did protest against the riots against Indonesian Muslims in East Timor, but "not by inflaming one group against another" (Forum Keadilan, Oct. 23, 1995).

Only two weeks after Muladi's amazing statement, Amien Rais, the leader of the second largest Muslim organization in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah, uttered an even stronger statement than Muladi or Abdurrachman Wahid. In a special interview with The Australian , the Middle East specialist who also teaches at the Political Science department of the prestigious Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta stated that East Timor should eventually be allowed to separate from Indonesia, if that was the wish of its people.

Amien Rais, who had been a strong critic of Mgr. Belo during the heat of the September 1995 ethnic riots in East Timor, showed a quite different attitude in the interview, although still implicitly blaming the East Timorese people for all the trouble that his country was facing. He said he believed that Jakarta had done what it could for East Timor, having invested heavily in infrastructure such as schools and hospitals.

"If the development for the next three or four years is still uncertain ,,, if the East Timorese still want a referendum then I would say it is better to give them a chance to have a referendum. Even if they want to separate from Indonesia. Let it be. It's better for them and better for Indonesia too," said the 1981 Ph.D. graduate from Chicago University in the USA.

He believes that his government has done its best, "but if the East Timorese still want a referendum and want to have a free country then I think it's better to say goodbye. If the result of the referendum is true then we can't stick to our position. Let them be free."

Amien Rais said he understood why Jakarta would not condone independence for East Timor. Apart from not wanting to lose face before the international community, the Indonesian government does not want to stimulate secessionist tendencies in other parts of the archipelago.

But according to the Gadjah Mada University lecturer, whom at one stage had risked the wrath of the Yogyakarta military by publishing an article on East Timor by Australian senior academic Herbert Feith in a political science journal he had edited, Amien Rais believed that both objections could be overcome. The "face" issue would be forgotten in three or four months, and the Indonesian government had to recognise East Timor's special historical circumstances, which differ from "other provinces," according to Rais. (11)

I also believe, based on reading interviews with and columns written by several retired generals, during and long after the 1975 invasion, that within the armed forces there may still be some officers who do understand, as Robert MacNamara did, decades after the end of the Vietnam War, that the Seroja Operation was a mistake.

During the 1975 invasion, the then commander of Kostrad, Lieut. General Leo Lopulissa was in Paris. He confided to a retired colleague not long after the invasion, that "I am only the manager of a funeral parlor. Only that! I am not involved. I am only in charge of the funerals of the men who didn't come back." (12)

Then, 18 years after the invasion, in an interview in with a Jakarta weekly, the Ret. Lieut. General Dading Kalbuadi, who was second in command during the invasion, said: "I fell really terrible, because more of my boys died than under any other panglima [commander], and more wives were widowed .. You guys know the Taman Seroja housing complex [for disabled veterans of the East Timor war]? I don't have the courage to go there, because I feel such pity. It was all because of me. Even though I was just carrying out the orders of the Government" (Jakarta-Jakarta, July 24-30, 1993: 30).

And only last year, in a column in Gatra on February 10, 1996, titled "Penggunaan kekerasan" [The use of violence], Ret. General Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo, one of the army's brightest strategists, compared Indonesia's intervention in East Timor with the USSR's intervention in Afghanistan, the USA's intervention in Vietnam, and the current Russian intervention in Chechnya.

So, what they searching for is basically, a strategy to retreat from East Timor, which could save the least "face" for the current ruling elite, possibly by putting the burden of the blame on factions within the regime who are already out of favour with those in power at the moment. Let us hope that that time will come soon.

**Endnotes:**

1) Jacob Herin, an STT journalist was beaten up by members of the local Pemuda Pancasila branch, who were upset about a report Herin had written about the branch chair, Achmad Alkatiri (Sinar , Dec. 24, 1994: 75; Forum Keadilan , Jan. 5, 1995: 27). However, not only political or criminal news could let a journalists into trouble in East Timor. Even reporting a cholera outbreak could let them into the military's interrogation rooms, because it was perceived as giving a bad image to `integration.'

2) See G.J. Aditjondro, 1993. "Prospek pembangunan Timor Timur, sesudah penangkapan Xanana Gusmao" [The prospect of development in East Timor, after the capture of Xanana Gusmao], Hayam Wuruk, No. 1/Vol. VIII, pp. 62-67. The editors of this student bulletin had much more courage than the editors of the author's own former university journal, Kritis, which had turned the author's article down for fear of governmental repercussions. A former editor of Hayam Wuruk, Petrus Haryanto, is now the detained Secretary General of PRD, and is being tried in Jakarta under that draconian anti- subversive law which carried the death penalty as its maximum sentence.

3) See Aris Arief Mundayat, 1993. "Militerisme di Indonesia," Pijar, No. 5, Vol. V, pp. 22-24.

4) For a history about this movement, see Max Lane, "Winning democracy in Indonesia: new stage for the progressive movement," Links, No. 2, July-Sept. 1994, pp. 19-34; Max Lane, "The progressive movement in Indonesia: an update," Links, No. 4, Jan.-March 1995, pp. 101- 105.

5) See interviews in Jum'at, Dec. 6-19, 1991; Panji Masyarakat, Sept. 1-10, 1994, June 1-10, 1994, Jan. 1-10, 1995; and Ummat, Oct. 2, 1995, which focus on the Dili massacre, APCET I in Manila, and the September ethnic riots in East Timor.

6) After placing the order in 1979, the first batch of fourteen A-4 and two TA-4H Skyhawks were received by Indonesia from Israel in 1980, followed up with a second identical group from the same source in 1985. The first batch may be the survivors of the 1973 Yom Kippur war, while the second batch may have been used in Israel's air raid on Beirut and in the consequent air war with Syria over the Bekaa Valley (June 1982). This complicity with Israel has reduced Indonesia's support for the struggles of oppressed Muslim peoples in the world, including, for instance, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), whom, partly due to Indonesia's mediation, having given up their call for self- determination and supported Manila's offer for greater autonomy. See Michael Leifer, 1985, "The Islamic factor in Indonesia's foreign policy: a case of functional ambiguity," in Adeed Dawisha (ed). Islam in foreign policy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 156; Lindsay Peacock, 1987. A-4 Skyhawk. London: Osprey Publishing; Warplane , No. 6, Vol. 1, pp. 101-105.

7) See Jose Ramos-Horta, 1987. Funu: the unfinished saga of East Timor. Trenton: The Red Sea Press, p. 148; John R.C. Djopari, 1993. Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka. Jakarta: Grasindo, p. 129.

8) See Mgr. Belo's interview with Matra, August 1992, pp. 13-23; Faustino Cardoso Gomes, "Peristiwa berdarah Santa Cruz: implikasi model pembangunan," Veritas, No. 4/Vol. I, 1991-1992, p. 8; Gregor Neonbasu, 1992. Keadilan dan perdamaian di Diosis Dili, Timor Timur (Dalam terang ajaran resmi Gereja Katolik). Dili: Komisi Komunikasi Sosial Diosis Dili, p. 38; Aditjondro, 1994, p. 46, 71-72; Suara Rakyat Maubere, No. 2 (the defence plea of Aleixo da Silva (Cobra) in Dili on June 8, 1992).

9) I have discussed the Waihale kingdom myth, the Balibo declaration myth and other historical myths in G.J. Aditjondro, The Indonesian history as opium for the East Timorese and Indonesian peoples. Paper presented at the Asian Studies Seminar Series of the Asian Studies Programme, Murdoch University in Perth, West Australia, on Friday, March 3, 1995.

10) See Patrick Walters, "Academic warns of `collective mistake,'" The Australian, Nov. 27, 1996.

11) See Patrick Walters, "Let E Timor decide: Muslim chief," The Australian, Dec. 11, 1996.

12) See David Jenkins, 1987. Suharto and his generals: Indonesian military politics 1975-1983. Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, p. 24).